

LONG-TERM CARE COUNCIL

EST. 2015

Meeting Minutes

Meeting: Pennsylvania Long-Term Care Council (LTCC)

Date: February 10, 2022

Start & End Time: 10:00 a.m. to 11:34 a.m.

Location/Format: Hybrid PDA and WebEx Meeting w/ Dial-In Option

Council Members in Attendance

Insurance Commissioner Jessica Altman (Designee: Katie Merritt) *

Acting Secretary of Health Keara Klinepeter (Designee: Megan Barbour, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Health) *

Eric Beittel, Long-Term Care (LTC) Insurance Representative

Sen. Michele Brooks (Designee: Joan Bradbury) *

Janice Cameron, PA Council on Aging (PCOA) Representative

Representative Gary Day (Designee: Shannon Walker) *

Shona Eakin, LTSS Consumer Representative

Glenda Ebersole, Executive Director LTCC

Sec. of Transp. Yassmin Gramian (Designee: Danielle Spila)*

Nancy Hodgson, PhD, RN, Academic Representative

Samella Hudson-Brewton, Senior Community Center Representative

David Nace, MD, LTSS Physician Representative

Shane Nugent, For-Profit Skilled Nursing Facility Representative

Teresa Osborne, Consumer Advocacy Representative

Rep. Steve Samuelson (Designee Charles (Chuck) Miller)*

MG Mark Schindler, The Adjutant General (Designee: Travis Davis)*

Acting Sec. of Human Services, Meg Snead (Designee: Jennifer Hale) *

Mike Sokoloski, Homecare Representative

Sec. of Aging Robert Torres, Council Chair

Lon Wible, Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Representative

Matt Yarnell, Consumer Advocacy Representative

Margie Zelenak, Assisted Living/Personal Care Home Representative

Heshie Zinman, Consumer Advocacy Representative

*Attended on member's behalf

Council Members Not in Attendance

Maria Collett, Senator (Designee, Tom Holroyd)

Kimberly VanHaitsma, PhD - Academic Research Representative

Mark Gusek, LTC Managed Care Representative

Lydia Hernandez-Velez, Consumer Advocacy Representative

George Hartwick III, County Commissioners Assoc. of PA Representative

Robert Marino, Caregiver Representative

Diane Menio, Caregiver Representative

Robin Wiessmann, PA Housing Finance Agency Executive Director/CEO (Designee: Gelene Nason)

Vini Portzline, LTSS Consumer Representative

Nicole Pruitt, Adult Day Center Representative

Missy Shupe, LTSS Consumer Representative

Megan Stedjan, Nonprofit Skilled Nursing Facility Representative

PDA Staff in Attendance

Steven Horner, Deputy Secretary

Maria Dispenziere, Executive Assistant to Deputy Secretary

Karen Gray, Communications Director

Carolyn Green, Legislative Director

Emily Holladay, Deputy Legislative/Policy Director

Stephanie Cole, Special Assistant to the Secretary

Committee Members & Guests in Attendance*

Roy Afflerbach

Larry Appel

Carl Berry

Kathy Cubit

Katie Dotto

Carl Feldman

Shannon Foley

David Golin

Wilmarie Gonzalez

Mike Grier

Faith Haeussler

Marcus Huertas

Jeff Iseman

David Kelley

Natalie Krak

Rebecca May-Cole

Mr. Michael Murphy, III

Danielle Rudy

Margot Troutman

Lou Wolkenstein

Missy Wyatt

*Only the attendance of members and guests who logged into the meeting via the WebEx platform can be captured unless the individual indicated otherwise.

Discussion Items and Summary

Welcome

Secretary Torres opened the meeting with a welcome to members and attendees and made the following announcements:

- Secretary indicated that a Megan Stedjan, Leading Age Director of Member Engagement was appointed by the Governor to represent the nonprofit skilled nursing facilities.
- Secretary shared that former LTCC Executive Director, Chuck Quinnan, accepted a position at Leading Age. Chuck will be replacing former council member Anne Henry, as Senior Vice President.
- Secretary announced that any individuals who are not members of the LTCC who would like to address the council and is not already scheduled to present will have an opportunity during the public comment period at the end of the meeting. The comments must be relevant to the scope and practice of the LTCC. A reasonable time limit will be placed on comments to accommodate the agenda.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the December 9, 2021 minutes was made by Heshie Zinman and seconded by Matt Yarnell. The minutes of the December 9, 2021 council meeting were unanimously approved.

Approval of update to Bylaws

An update to the council membership portion of bylaws to include representation from PA State Veterans Commission to align with Act 63 of

2021. A motion to approve was made by Matt Yarnell and seconded by Margie Zelenak. The by-laws update for the council was unanimously approved.

Commonwealth Updates

Budget Update – Natalie Krak, Deputy Secretary of Policy and Planning, Office of Governor

- Governor Wolf shared his final budget proposals on Tuesday, February 8, 2022.
 - Long-Term Care has been a priority and area of focus throughout his Administration.
- \$91.25 million increase to medical assistance rates for the skilled nursing facility providers.
 - \$91.25 million - state funding anticipated \$190 million federal match if appropriated by the General Assembly the rate increase would go into effect January 1, 2023, for 6 months until the next budget starting on July 1, 2023 – The total would be \$380 million for the full year. Funding intent is to be made available to providers in advance to provide time and added resources for staff to meet the DOH increased staffing ratios.
- \$14 million increase to State Veterans homes – skilled nursing facilities.
- DOH proposed regulations will put out third group of skilled nursing facilities regs in next couple of weeks – regarding change of ownership.
- \$50 million increase for supplementary payments to personal care homes – raising the funding from \$430/month to \$1,350/month maximum to support lower income older adults living in personal care homes. Rates haven't increased in decades.
- \$36.6 million proposed increase for behavioral health services on the county level. Investing in mental health services is important especially after recovering from the pandemic.
- \$14.3 million increase in SNAP benefits for older adults and adults with disabilities.

- \$7 million investment for DHS to open a wing of beds to support older adult inmates transitioning out of state correctional facilities who suffer from complex medical or behavioral health issues.

Initiatives-\$1.7 billion ARPA spending plan:

- \$250 million LTC continuum – includes facility and Home & Community based services for workforce recruitment and retention payments and more specific workforce development for training and tuition assistance.
 - We welcome input from LTCC members on this spending plan.
- \$200 million for the Nellie Bly tuition program to expand eligible institutions to community colleges and PASSE – assisting with healthcare workforce
- \$35 million in student loan forgiveness for the nurse program and looking to expand eligibility, credentials and licensed professions.
- Last month the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed Act 2 of 2022 which provides \$225 million investment for a hospital and healthcare worker package including an additional \$15M for the nursing program.

Q: What is Natalie's email address to send input on ARPA funds?

A: nkrak@pa.gov

Q: Any of the budget increases for OLTL specific rate increases for Community Health Choices, OBRA waiver and Act 150? If so, by what percentage would the respective rates increase by (2%-3%, etc. for providers and the workforce?)

A: Natalie will take the question back to the DHS and update the council.

Comment: Appreciate the briefing and excited for the Governor's budget address highlighting many areas of LTC.

Q: Any proposed increase for DOM care along with proposed PCH rates?

A: Natalie will follow up with information.

Q: Can you provide any details on the “wing of beds” to be opened for elderly correction facility guests who require LTC – where is this going to be located?

A: Natalie will follow up with this information.

Healthcare Group Sponsor Apprenticeship Industry Partnership –
Wilmarie Gonzalez, Director, Bureau of Quality Assurance & Program Analytics
David Kelly, MD
Larry Appel, MD, SFHM Medical Director

A [power point presentation](#) was provided to the council on Joint Collaboration between CHC-MCOs and Nursing Facilities on “Quality of Care”.

- CHC Quality Infrastructure
- Creating quality support for nursing facilities that are CHC participants
- Activities support nursing facilities to date
- Goals to Improve Quality of Care
- Quality incentive program
- Nursing facility staffing ratios
- Learning network

Q: Do you have any frontline workers engaged?

A: Yes, the frontline workers are key element.

Comment: Full intent of learning opportunity is for all front-line workers. Including recruitment of nursing home staff from both rural and urban areas.

Comment: Surrounding Pneumococcal vaccination – Recommendations have been confusing. i.e., Do individuals really need another vaccination? What are the challenges? (Dr. David Nace).

Q: Do personal care workers having access to the Learning network?

A: Funding geared toward nursing facilities.

Comment: Matt Yarnell willing to offer support recruiting front line workers. Encouraged to connect with him.

PA Department of Aging (PDA) - Secretary Torres reported on the following as a year in review and current ongoing initiatives:

- **PACE** – General Assembly extended COLA moratorium and increased income limit of \$6,000 single/married individuals in the PACENET program. This week mailed out 11,000 new enrollment cards, effective start date for new enrollees is February 21, 2022. Projecting total of 20,000 new enrollment for 2022.
- **Financial Exploitation Taskforce** – In January 2022 met to report out on the progress made in implementing recommendations. Director Ebersole is project manager of FES. Several workgroups are working on implementing recommendations targeting summer timeframe to complete as many as possible. Task Force plans to reconvene this Spring 2022 to check progress.
- **Protective Services Complement** – Governor included funding in this budget proposal to increase the number of PDA PS employees. Elder abuse reporting increased 117% over the last 7 years, cases investigated and substantiated was 161% and 202%. Work is being done to modernize this initiative. Staffing increase needed to keep pace with increased workload as recommended by Office of Inspector General Report from 2019.
- **Intergenerational University Connections Program** – Program continues to do very well. Penn State University Scranton has joined the program.
- **University of PA and University of Pittsburgh Collaborations** – On January 28th the Secretary visited Philadelphia to learn more about the research being done related to Alzheimer's Diseases and other dementias including biomedical research, public health interventions, and caregiving interventions and how they are being implemented. LTCC member Dr. Nancy Hodgson was a presenter around her work moving dementia caregiving evidence into practice.
- **ACL** – Notified of \$4 million award to expand public health workforce for individuals to support older adults or individuals with disabilities. We are in the process of evaluating how to utilize funding. Funds to be used over the next 2 years. It cannot be used to increase wages of existing employees.
- **Q:** Act 9 – Were monies appropriated to support Act 9 on Alzheimer's and early detection?
- **A:** No

PA Department of Human Services (DHS) – Jennifer Hale, Director of the Bureau of Policy and Regulatory Management for DHS’ Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL), provided departmental updates as follows:

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):

- Act 24 of 2021 – Appropriated \$282 million to LTC living programs for nursing facilities, personal care homes and assisted living residences
 - Medicaid enrolled providers – Funds distributed September of 2021.
 - Non-MA enrolled providers DHS had to manually generate payments from information that was received from the facilities - Received approx. 1,033 forms back from facilities. 87% of those received have been processed. 180 forms not returned by providers. They have been identified and outreach is taking place to retrieve forms.
- Appropriated money for implementation of the indoor air management grant – received 360 applications. Pulling information together to enter into a grant agreement to release funding.
- Strengthening Direct Care Workforce payments – release shared on letters sent to providers on December 21st notifying them of their approval amounts and asking them to complete an attestation form.
 - 54% of eligible personal assistants who returned their attestation forms will receive payment of February 23rd
 - 53% of eligible residential habilitation providers that returned their attestation forms will receive payment on February 23rd
 - 57% of eligible adult day service providers that return their attestation forms will receive payment on February 23rd

Q: Is 87% processed by DHS or Treasury?

A: Treasury

Commonwealth Update – Megan Barbour, MPH, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Health, PA Department of Health

- Significant trend in downward decline of Covid-19 cases both in skilled nursing facilities and personal care homes.

- Levels lower than we have recorded for the same time last year.
- Counts can be found on DOH LTC website page
- Vaccination rates for skilled nursing facilities
 - 90% residents vaccinated
 - 83% staff vaccinated
- Federal government tracking booster vaccinations
 - 75% of residents who are fully vaccinated are also boosted
 - 35% of staff are fully vaccinated
 - Would like to see the numbers higher so they are completing direct outreach and track facilities over time
 - Booster education materials have been created for staff, residents, and administrators and shared through various channels
- Antivirals: Treatments are authorized for patients who test positive and who are high-risk. PA receiving limited supply and have operationalized a temporary product registry for long-term care facilities. DOH is holding these products in strategic reserve. Shared information with long-term care facilities to understand process on requesting treatments.
- Four long-term care regional support sites established – Purpose is to relieve hospital and skilled nursing facilities due to capacity issues related to COVID-19. Clinical and non-clinical staff are already arriving onsite. Will be adding more sites over the next week to ensure geographical areas are included.
 1. Vincentian Home - Pittsburgh
 2. Lutheran Home - Hollidaysburg
 3. Springs at the Watermark - Philadelphia
 4. Fairview Nursing and Rehabilitation - Clarion County
- [LTC RISE program](#) – Launched and fully operationalized program called Long Term Care Resiliency Infrastructure Supports and Empowerment that will continue to focus on much of the work of the RCAT program including 24/7-hour call centers, technical assistance, consultation, assessment, and training, etc. to facilities that were eligible for the RCAT program. LTC RISE is building resiliency of long-term care facilities, intermediate care, and person care homes to implement quality improvement projects.

Q: Does the reported booster shot percentages include all staff/residents or staff/residents eligible for boosters?

A: The definition that CDC reports out on includes all staff and residents who are fully vaccinated – there is no delineation between the number of individuals who are eligible.

Q: What are the vaccination rates for personal care and assisted living?

A: Survey was to be released but have not seen that information yet. Dr. Kelley will follow up with this information

Q: Will there be an update to PA Han 610 regarding residents that are "up to date" with vaccinations? This would include the booster.

A: Yes, we are working on several HAN updates.

Q: What type of antibody testing is being done in nursing homes or for folks living at home after having been vaccinated?

A: Challenge is that antibody levels don't necessarily mean protection. We don't know if that is the case with COVID-19 and how it will affect individual's long term.

Open Session

Secretary Torres: The next LTCC meeting will take place on Thursday, April 14, 2022.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

New Action Items

Action Item 1:

Q: Any of the budget increases for OLTL specific rate increases for Community Health Choices, OBRA waiver and Act 150? If so, by what percentage would the respective rates increase by 2%-3%, etc. for providers and the workforce?

A: An 8% rate increase was put into effect on January 1, 2022 for direct care workers and was included in the budget for future funding.

Q: Any proposed increase for DOM care along with proposed PCH rates?

A: As proposed in the budget, the \$50M only includes a rate increase for personal care homes, but the Administration will work with the legislature through the budget negotiations to include Dom Care.

Q: Can you provide any details on the “wing of beds” to be opened for elderly correction facility guests who require LTC – where is this going to be located?

A: Proposal is to use Warren State Hospital.

Q: What are the vaccination rates for personal care and assisted living?

A: Survey was to be released but have not seen that information yet. Dr. Kelley will follow up with this information.